

For Immediate Release

SunshineReview.org congratulates the Utah Senate

Passage of S.B 18 is a good start to bringing transparency to Utah

CHICAGO, February 5 – The government transparency website SunshineReview.org congratulates the Utah State Senate for speaking with a unanimous voice and passing Senate Bill 18. This legislation, which mandates that all local governments post their budget information on the Utah Public Finance Website, is a good start to bringing government transparency to Utah.

"This action taken by the state senate shows a real desire by elected officials to make government more open and honest with the people," said Sunshine Review Manager, Kristin McMurray. "However it's important that legislators understand that transparency means more than just having a budget visible on the internet."

The Sam Adams Alliance, which sponsors Sunshine Review, has launched the "No Taxation Without Information" campaign to promote greater transparency at the state and local level. Included in the effort is the My Government Website Project to determine the extent government-managed websites contain the information people need.

Sunshine Review has also developed a transparency checklist, which is a list of website transparency features that, ideally, taxpayers will be able to find when they visit the websites of counties, cities, school districts, and state agencies.

"The transparency checklist has become the standard that all state and local governments should be measured by when it comes to transparency," said Sam Adams Alliance President, John Tsarpalas. "We

hope the state of Utah will comply with the transparency checklist and become a model-state for transparency that other states will want to emulate."

The Sam Adams Alliance believes that citizens are also entitled to information about taxes, contracts, lobbying efforts, contact information for elected officials and administrators, as well as meetings and public records. Without such information being easily accessible, citizens can't effectively hold politicians and public officials accountable.

"To often politicians talk about implementing legislation to make government more open and honest, but rarely do they follow through," Tsarpalas said. "Utah has already gone against the tide and set the state on a path toward transparency. I hope they will utilize the work of the Sam Adams Alliance as a guide and expand their efforts."

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The Sam Adams Alliance is a non-profit organization that trains and inspires citizens to utilize new media tools to advance economic freedom and individual liberty. SAA on the Internet: Samadamsalliance.org